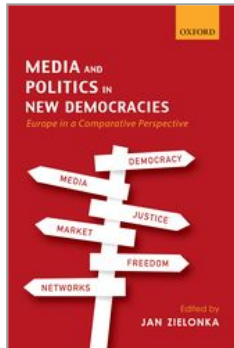


Variety of Media Systems in Third-Wave Democracies

University Press Scholarship Online

Oxford Scholarship Online



Media and Politics in New Democracies: Europe in a Comparative Perspective

Jan Zielonka

Print publication date: 2015

Print ISBN-13: 9780198747536

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: November 2015

DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198747536.001.0001

Variety of Media Systems in Third-Wave Democracies

José Santana Pereira

DOI:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198747536.003.0015

Abstract and Keywords

The main goal of this chapter is to present Portugal and Spain as relevant benchmarks for the analysis of the relationship between media and politics in the CEE new democracies. Throughout the chapter, a comparative framework of the European Union member states in 2009 is used in order to offer the reader a detailed, contextualized, and updated analysis of the main features that characterize the Portuguese and Spanish media systems, as well as the implications for the role of the media in the political process. In addition to discussing the cases of Spain and Portugal, this chapter also offers some ideas on how specific CEE countries may resemble the media systems of the Iberian nations.

Keywords: Portugal, Spain, media systems, polarized pluralism, market development, intervention, political bias, journalist professionalization

Variety of Media Systems in Third-Wave Democracies

The number of comparative studies in the field of political communication increased considerably after Daniel Hallin and Paolo Mancini's publication of *Comparing Media Systems*.¹ In this book, four dimensions are used to distinguish between the media environments in Western countries around the year 2000: press market development, parallelism between parties and media outlets, state intervention in the realm of media, and levels of journalist professionalization. The authors conclude that in Western Europe and North America three types of media systems² coexisted: a polarized pluralist model (in Southern Europe), a democratic corporatist model (in Scandinavia and some Western European countries), and a liberal model (Canada, USA, Ireland, and the UK). Within this framework, both Portugal and Spain are described as polarized pluralist media systems, given their weak press markets and low patterns of journalistic professionalization, as well as strong state intervention in the realm of media and parallelism between media outlets and political parties.

One of the most interesting trends in comparative political communication research in the last decade has been the work on the development of Central and Eastern European (CEE)³ media systems after the end of the communist regimes. Initially, similarities between some CEE media systems and the Mediterranean media model were referred to as signs of a process of *Italianization*. In fact, this term was used because it seemed that the media systems in Eastern European new democracies would import/reproduce the Italian model (political parallelism, weak professionalization, overwhelming importance of television over newspapers).⁴ Two decades after the democratic breakthrough, the idea that other polarized pluralistic models could actually be interesting benchmarks for the analysis of the CEE media systems started to gain ground (p.232) amongst political communication scholars, especially due to the impact that features such as late democratization and strong TV market commercialization (which are dominant in most CEE countries but do not characterize Italy) might have had in the development of these media markets.

Variety of Media Systems in Third-Wave Democracies

The assumption that Iberian and CEE countries may have comparable media systems is strengthened by the similarities in these nations' political past and present. It takes just a quick look at the political system correlates of the Mediterranean model to appreciate the similarities between CEE countries and Southern European new democracies such as Portugal, Spain, and even Greece. However, an analysis of specific media system characteristics offers a more complex picture. A series of case studies and essays published in 2010⁵ and 2012⁶ argue that the shift from a strictly defined communist model to post-communist models might have represented a mirroring of some European models or the creation of hybrids mixing the ideal-types proposed by Hallin and Mancini. In order to fully understand the path followed by each CEE media system, a relevant step is to test the most plausible hypothesis: mediterraneanization. Since this process does not necessarily mean a duplication of the Italian media system, other benchmarks are necessary.

The goal of this chapter is therefore to present Portugal and Spain as relevant benchmarks for the analysis of the relationship between media and politics in the CEE new democracies. Portugal and Spain are addressed separately, despite the fact that they are characterized as very similar systems within the polarized pluralistic model: in practice, an Iberian model. I argue that, despite sharing several features, these nations constitute different examples of the polarized pluralistic media system model. Unquestionably, these two neighbouring countries display several similarities, which are certainly due to the fact that they have followed the same pattern of political events over the last century: a short and turbulent experience of democratic republicanism, the implementation of authoritarian regimes that lasted several decades, an official absence from the Second World War, and a bloody war that caused the death of many and left deep scars in the society (the 1936–1939 Civil War in Spain, the 1961–74 Colonial War in the so-called *overseas provinces* of Portugal). Both countries became democracies in the mid-1970s, achieved democratic consolidation in the 1980s, and became European Economic Community and Eurozone members at the same time. However, the economic power and

Variety of Media Systems in Third-Wave Democracies

regional diversity of Spain vis-à-vis the weaker economic status of Portugal and its unity as nation state, as well as other factors that distinguish these nations, had an impact on the development of their media systems.

This chapter rests on a comparative framework describing the European Union member states in 2009.⁷ It offers a detailed analysis of the main features that characterize the Portuguese and Spanish media systems (with a particular (p.233) focus on the dimensions that either are directly linked to the realm of politics or that may have an impact on the role of the media in democratic societies), as well as some insights into how specific CEE media systems may resemble these countries. This comparative framework encompasses the dimensions suggested by Hallin and Mancini (market development, state intervention, journalistic professionalization, political parallelism)⁸ as well as other politically relevant dimensions that are related to these factors. Nevertheless, there is a difference between the original theoretical model and the approach taken here. In this chapter, I explore patterns of media political bias instead of political parallelism, since the former may be more suitable for a comparison between the two geographical extremes of the EU and more applicable to the CEE countries. This is because the concept of political parallelism rests on the existence of a relatively stable party system that the media outlets mirror more or less perfectly. This is the case in Portugal and Spain, but not in the CEE countries, where party system fluidity is a relevant pattern.⁹

The chapter is organized as follows. In the next four subsections, the Iberian countries are characterized in terms of press market development, state intervention in the media, political bias, and journalist professionalization. Within each subsection, an array of comparable data is used to place Portugal and Spain in the European landscape; then, the similarities and differences with CEE countries are discussed, and the relevance and impact of different levels of development, state intervention, political bias, and journalist professionalization are discussed. The concluding section of this chapter presents the main insights that the Portuguese and Spanish cases may offer to the students of CEE media systems.

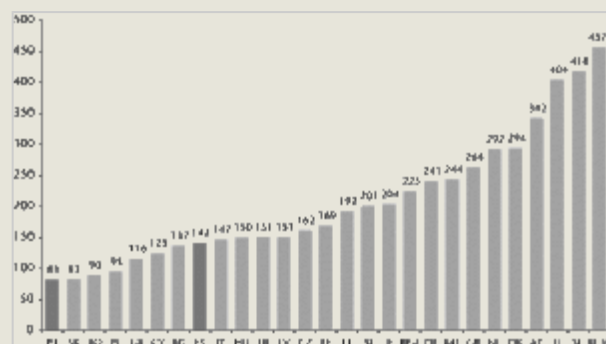
The Portuguese and Spanish Media Systems in Comparative Perspective

Press Market Development

The Portuguese and Spanish media landscapes were described by Daniel Hallin and Paolo Mancini as having a weak press market, with a small number of newspapers that were not consumed by the general public, but rather by a small elite. A predominance of TV exposure over newspaper readership was also a distinctive feature of the Iberian systems. The data collected by the *World Association of Newspapers* in 2009¹⁰ confirms these trends. First, the average circulation of newspapers weighted by country population (a good proxy for market size) shows that both markets were focusing on a minority of citizens, even if the press market is relatively larger in Spain than in Portugal (Figure 15.1). However, the Iberian countries are not an exceptional case in the European context: in 2009, newspaper circulation in Southern, Central,

(p.234)

and Eastern Europe was very modest, which leads us to think that publishers were aware that the number of daily newspapers readers (or buyers) would not be very different from a figure between 8.3 (Portugal) and 20 per cent (Slovenia) of the entire population (Figure 15.1).



[Click to view larger](#)

Figure 15.1.¹¹ Relative size of the press market: Average circulation of newspapers (in thousands) by a million people in Europe, 2009

Source: My own elaboration on the World Association of Newspapers 2010 Yearbook data

Variety of Media Systems in Third-Wave Democracies

There are also differences between the Iberian countries in terms of the number of available titles. According to the *World Association of Newspapers*, in 2009 there were 155 daily newspapers in Spain, while in Portugal it was possible to find twenty-five different daily titles in the newstands. The Spanish market was therefore amongst the EU markets with higher press diversity (right after Germany); by contrast, Portugal was one of the twelve EU member states with the lowest number of daily newspapers. Given that this data does not distinguish between nation-wide and regional newspapers, the difference between the two Iberian countries is due to the cultural and regional diversity of Spain as opposed to the strongly unified and much smaller Portugal, where the regional media do not have the same strength or *raison d'être*.

Lastly, the predominance of TV over newspapers is still a reality. On average, a Spaniard spends fifteen minutes per day reading newspapers and almost four hours watching television.¹² There is no similar data for the Portuguese habits of newspaper readership in 2009, but there are reasons to believe that they would be equally low. In 2009, the average Portuguese spent 3.5 hours of his/her day watching TV. Survey data shows that in Portugal virtually everybody watches TV, while just about two-thirds of the citizens under sixty-four and a (p.235) third of the citizens over sixty-five report newspaper reading habits. In the previous month, half of the interviewees had not read or even opened a daily newspaper.¹³

In sum, although it can be said that the Spanish and Portuguese markets are not among the strongest in Europe, the comparative advantage of Spain is undeniable, especially in terms of number of titles and relative size of the press market. If the Spanish press market is weak, the Portuguese press market is weaker than its neighbour's. The *World Association of Newspapers* data shows that the media landscape in CEE countries is quite diversified, but on average the media markets are quite fragile too. For instance, the average number of daily newspapers in the CEE countries is thirty-seven titles, even if Bulgaria, Romania, and Czech Republic display more diversity in the newsstands than Slovakia or Slovenia. Moreover, the average size of the CEE

Variety of Media Systems in Third-Wave Democracies

press markets is about 14 per cent of the total population, with Slovak and Romanian markets being smaller than those of Hungary and Bulgaria. The latter is also one of the few CEE countries where daily newspaper circulation increased between 2006 and 2011. The trend has been the opposite, especially in Poland, and can surely be connected to moderate to large cuts in the advertising expenditure in CEE media.¹⁴ In terms of TV predominance, the similarities between Eastern and Iberian countries are evident: in the CEE countries, the average amount of time watching TV is considerably high (3h 40m), with Romanian and Polish citizens dedicating more than four hours to television watching.¹⁵

What are the implications of this? A small, fragile press market may lead to a weakened role of newspapers as a means of vertical communication between the political elites and the citizens, leading them to operate more as a horizontal communication device between the political world and the other elites.¹⁶ A recent survey found that about half of Portuguese citizens believe that drawing the attention of the media to a specific subject is an effective form of political participation.¹⁷ However, it is reasonable to assume that most citizens were thinking about the role and power of the television instead of the press, considering the relevance that television has in the Portuguese media landscape and the low levels of newspaper circulation. Also, although TV is seen as a means of vertical communication, this communication is often done in a sensationalistic fashion (through the use of human interest and dramatic frames), which often contributes to the erosion of trust in the political realm.

It can also be argued that a small market also poses financial challenges to the long-term survival of newspapers, and weakens their capacity to resist political and economic pressures by eroding their autonomy. In 2009, the relationship between the size of the press market and an index of journalistic professionalization in Europe (see 'Journalist Professionalization') was very strong,¹⁸ which suggests that journalists are more autonomous and devoted to the public service ideal in wider markets. Accordingly, political¹⁹ and (p.236) economic²⁰ threats to press freedom (as measured by

Variety of Media Systems in Third-Wave Democracies

Freedom House)²¹ are stronger in smaller press markets.²² In Portugal and Spain, the economic threats to press freedom were negligible in 2009, especially in comparison to Italy and most CEE countries, but political threats are a problem in Spain, as we will see in more detail below. Nevertheless, economic threats to newspaper survival are significant: for instance, in the last ten years, two mainstays of the Portuguese press (the right-wing *Independente* and the tabloid *24 Horas*) disappeared, while other important titles, such as *Público*, carried out a substantial reduction of their journalistic staff and struggle for survival.

State Intervention: Ownership, Funding, Regulation

The most relevant Portuguese broadcasting companies are the state-owned *RTP* (1956/1957), with two open-signal channels (*RTP1* and *RTP2*), and the commercial broadcasters *SIC* (1992) and *TVI* (1993). In Spain, *TVE* (1956) also has two channels, while *Mediaset España* controls *Cuatro* (2005) and *Telecinco* (1989). *Atresmedia Televisión*, which owns *Antena 3* (1990) and *LaSexta* (2006), is also a relevant competitor in the Spanish market. In Portugal, RTP lost the battle for audiences in the mid-1990s, mostly due to the competitive, fresh, and modern style adopted by SIC and, later, by TVI. In 2009, the two public channels reached less than 30 per cent of audience share, while the two private broadcasters were able to attract more than half of the TV-watching citizens. In Spain, the outlook is similar (Table 15.1), even though the two TVE channels had to compete with a wider set of private broadcasters.

The advent of commercial TV happened more or less at the same time in the Iberian Peninsula and CEE countries (i.e., around 1990). While in most CEE countries the first private broadcasters started to operate right after the fall of the communist regimes, in Portugal and Spain the liberalization of the television sector (as well as the privatization of some newspapers) only happened fifteen years after the democratic breakthrough. In line with what happens in most CEE (Poland excluded) and Southern European countries (Italy excluded), the Portuguese and Spanish television markets are strongly dominated by commercial broadcasters. However, there are

Variety of Media Systems in Third-Wave Democracies

differences in terms of the degree of commercialization. In Portugal and Spain, as well as in the Czech Republic or Estonia, private channels have about two times the audience share of the public broadcasters. In Romania and Bulgaria, commercialization has been more intense, with the state-owned TV getting six to nine times less audience share than the commercial channels (Table 15.1).

The Spanish and Portuguese television markets are therefore clearly dominated by commercial broadcasters. The relative weakness of the state-owned TV channels is a problem, mainly because public broadcasters tend to (and should) convey high-quality information to their audiences to a greater extent

(p.237)

Table 15.1. Relative audience shares of free access national public and private channels in Europe, 2009

	Public channels	Private channels	Diff.
Bulgaria	12.8	74	-61.2
Romania	7.1	66.4	-59.3
Greece	16.6	69.4	-52.8
Lithuania	13.7	58.5	-44.8
Hungary	13.6	56.8	-43.2
Slovakia	19.7	55.9	-36.2
Latvia	14.6	48.2	-33.6
Spain	22.6	55.7	-33.1
Cyprus	21.7	52.7	-31
Czech Republic	28.1	56.1	-28
Portugal	29.8	52.1	-22.3
Estonia	16.8	37.9	-21.1
France	34.4	53.1	-18.7
Slovenia	29.8	44.4	-14.6
Germany	43.1	52.5	-9.4

Variety of Media Systems in Third-Wave Democracies

	Public channels	Private channels	Diff.
Poland	41.6	45.6	-4
UK	36.4	40	-3.6
Finland	43.8	45.3	-1.5
Italy	40.7	41.9	-1.2
Belgium (Flanders)	41.2	40.6	0.6
Sweden	32.9	30.1	2.8
Malta	30.8	21	9.8
Belgium (Wallonia)	19.3	7.2	12.1
Netherlands	35.7	21.1	14.6
Austria	40.1	20.4	19.7
Ireland	37	13.6	23.4
Denmark	66.5	1.8	64.7

Source: My own elaboration on the European Audiovisual Observatory 2010 Yearbook data.

than commercial TV channels, thereby providing a public service to the citizenry. In the Iberian Peninsula, airtime dedicated to news and information is indeed higher in public than in private channels. In the case of Portugal, in 2007 there was an average of 6 per cent of airtime dedicated to news in commercial channels and 18 per cent in public channels. In Spain, the figures are 16 per cent for private broadcasters and 26 per cent for the public broadcasting service.²³ However, despite the fact that the Portuguese public channels broadcast more news, experts believe that RTP does not offer more political news, a wider range of programming, or more in-depth, accurate, and trustworthy information than the commercial broadcasters.²⁴ In Spain, commercial channels do offer less quality information than the TVE channels.²⁵ Consequently, the strong commercialization of the TV market looks more hazardous in Spain than in Portugal.

The degree to which a public broadcaster offers more news and high-quality information to their audience may depend on how dependent it is on (p.238) advertisement revenues. In

Variety of Media Systems in Third-Wave Democracies

other words, a public channel that receives a substantial proportion of its money from the state may feel less inclined to turn to *infotainment* and cut the airtime devoted to hard news, since its survival depends less on audience shares than on the quality of the public service provided. However, there are no significant differences between these two countries: the Portuguese RTP gets 77 per cent of its revenues from the state, while TVE needs advertisement to provide for a third of its expenses.²⁶ The fact that the public broadcasters get considerable amounts of funding from the state may result in a weaker tendency to produce low-quality content, but the deep economic crisis in the Iberian Peninsula menaces this model of public TV funding. The public broadcasters in Spain and Portugal are under serious threat, especially after the Greek public broadcasting service shutdown in July 2013. For instance, following government directions, the current RTP administration is implementing a series of measures aimed at restructuring the public broadcasting system and substantially cutting its costs, namely by means of staff reduction. Interestingly enough, except for Poland, Lithuania, and Slovenia, the CEE public broadcasters get more than four-fifths of their funds from the State.²⁷ As we have seen above, most of these broadcasters register considerably lower levels of audience share, which means that their capability to attract advertisement funds is weak and their sole survival is dependent on the will of the political actors.

A third form of state intervention concerns regulation. In order to grasp this aspect of European media systems, I use the Freedom House index of legal threats to press freedom, which is based on an examination of the laws and regulations that may influence media content and the government's inclination to use these laws and legal institutions to restrict the media's ability to operate.²⁸ Legal constraints are rather weak in Portugal and Spain, as well as in some CEE countries (Czech Republic, Baltic countries), especially in comparison to Italy, Romania, or Bulgaria. Indeed, the term 'savage deregulation' was once used to describe the process that opened the door to private broadcasters in Portugal.²⁹ One could actually argue that in 2009 there were three clusters in Central and Eastern Europe: countries where media legislation poses a serious

Variety of Media Systems in Third-Wave Democracies

threat to press freedom (Romania, Bulgaria), which are closer to the *status quo* in Italy; those where legal menaces to freedom are not an issue (Czech Republic, Baltic countries), thus being similar to the Iberian nations; and those that are placed between these two clusters (Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia).³⁰

Political Bias

Along with a weak press market and a commercialized TV context, the Portuguese media system is characterized by the concentration of multiple forms of (p.239) media into single organizations. *Impresa* controls one generalist open-signal channel (SIC), several cable channels, one weekly newspaper (*Expresso*) and one news magazine (*Visão*). *Media Capital* controls open-signal (TVI) and cable channels, an internet portal, and radio stations. *Diário de Notícias* and *Jornal de Notícias*, which were state-controlled from the mid-1970s to the late 1980s, now belong to the owner of the news radio station *TSF, Controlinveste* (renamed *Global Media Group* in December 2014). *Público* is owned by *Sonaecom*, the media and communication branch of one of the largest Portuguese private companies, SONAE. The state owns two generalist open-signal channels (*RTP1* and *RTP2*), a few cable and regional channels, the public radio station *RDP*, and the news agency *Lusa*. Lastly, the tabloid *Correio da Manhã* is owned by *Cofina*, which also controls the business newspaper *Jornal de Negócios*, the news magazine *Sábado*, two free newspapers (*Metro* and *Destak*), and the cable channel *CM TV*.

In Spain, the media environment is not very different, since patterns of cross-media concentration can also be found. For instance, *Prisa* controls not only the newspaper *El País*, but also owns several radio stations and about a fifth of the *Mediaset España* shares (*Telecinco*, *Cuatro*, other TV channels).³¹ Also, most media outlets in Spain belong to just a few owners. In 2009, five companies controlled more than two-thirds of the total newspaper circulation in Spain (*Prisa*, *Vocento*, *Unidad Editorial*, *Prensa Iberica*, and *Grupo Zeta*), and the television market was also very concentrated in the hands of a few different operators,³² some of which have

Variety of Media Systems in Third-Wave Democracies

interests in the Portuguese audiovisual market. In fact, TVI, founded by entities linked to the Catholic Church in 1993, was bought by *Prisa* in the 2000s.

Media concentration is often seen as a threat to the plurality of viewpoints or, in other terms, to external diversity. External diversity 'is constituted by a plurality of media actors, each of them representing a particular part of the entire spectrum of political opinions.'³³ Even if individual media actors are systematically imbalanced in favour of a specific political ideology or party, diversity emerges from the presence and interaction of these actors at the national level. Yet concentration only has an impact in terms of external diversity if ownership threatens neutrality or internal diversity,³⁴ and that is not always the case. For instance, in Italy the newspapers and TV channels owned by the Berlusconi family display a right-wing bias. However, in Portugal, the private broadcaster *SIC* and the weekly newspaper *Expresso*, which were created by Pinto Balsemão (prime minister between 1981 and 1983 and one of the founders of the centre-right party *Partido Social Democrata*), are not strongly biased in favour of this party, especially in comparison with the degree of bias in *El País* caused by the informal proximity between its owners and PSOE.³⁵

In Portugal, media political bias lost relevance after the normalization of the democratic regime. Levels of polarization in the party system are now lower (p.240) than in the 1980s,³⁶ and the trend is downward;³⁷ moreover, levels of party membership are low and declining in Portugal. Therefore, in commercial terms, it makes more sense for the media outlets to adopt a catch-all (or internally diverse) perspective on politics, reproducing the catch-all nature of the most important parties in the Portuguese landscape: PS and PSD.³⁸ In other words, political conflict does not sell. In the eyes of experts in media and politics, the most important daily newspapers in Portugal are not particularly biased. Among the subset of outlets that display a moderate level of partisanship (*Expresso* and the four TV channels), there was some degree of bipartisan balance in 2009 (i.e. a clear division of the biased outlets between PSD and PS).³⁹ This is arguably not a sign of

Variety of Media Systems in Third-Wave Democracies

political parallelism, both because the levels of bias are low and because the public channels are the most biased, its political leaning depending on which party is the incumbent. Survey data seems to confirm these trends: 40 to 50 per cent of Portuguese do not have an opinion on media plurality, which may be understood as the absence of blatant political leanings. Moreover, those who had an opinion considered private broadcasters to be less biased than the public broadcaster.⁴⁰

In Spain, political bias is believed to be fairly strong, and the levels of press-party parallelism were so significant that the expression *Parlamento de Papel* (Parliament of Paper) was used in reference to the Spanish newspaper market.⁴¹ Spanish newspapers cater to particular political audiences. Several considerations are important concerning specific outlets. First, while about a third of the Portuguese experts were unable to express an opinion about media-party relationships, this task seems to have been much easier for the Spanish experts. Second, the most relevant Spanish newspapers and private broadcasters display a moderate to high level of political bias. Third, while in the case of Portugal the public broadcaster was considered to be the most biased outlet due to its incumbent party liaisons, in Spain the most relevant newspapers and commercial channels are the outlets with the strongest levels of political bias.⁴²

Levels of political partiality of the most important outlets in the CEE countries vary considerably, with the Baltic countries displaying low to moderate levels of media partisanship, the public broadcasters in Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia being more biased than the commercial television, and the degree of internal diversity or neutrality in Hungarian and Romanian outlets varying considerably, independently of their nature (printed vs audiovisual) or ownership (public vs private).⁴³ Slovakia and Portugal share a relevant feature: a trend towards stronger levels of political bias in the public channels vis-à-vis their private counterparts, even if this trend is much stronger in the former than in the latter. Interestingly enough, in CEE countries, levels of political bias are believed to be stronger within locally owned mass media, which are not only the object, but also the subject of political instrumentalization

Variety of Media Systems in Third-Wave Democracies

and corruption.⁴⁴ One of the key features of specific CEE media systems, such as (p.241) those of Bulgaria or Romania, where ownership results in distorted media markets, is the fact that media are owned and run for reasons other than profit or public service, a pattern that has been associated with the departure of foreign investors (along with the professional standards that they defended) and the rise of local moguls who instrumentalize their media outlets.⁴⁵

Journalist Professionalization

This dimension refers to the degree to which journalists acknowledge and comply with norms of ethics and quality in their work. Journalist professionalization matters because it leads, at least theoretically, to higher standards of information quality, hence benefiting citizens who need political information in order to make their decisions. Levels of journalist professionalization⁴⁶ vary considerably in Europe. On an eleven-point scale, the average level of journalist professionalization according to experts is 4.9, meaning that overall levels of journalism professionalization in Europe are not particularly high. Nevertheless, there is a substantial difference between the situation in the EU Scandinavian countries (where the levels of professionalization are very high) and the patterns observed for Italy and several CEE nations (where the experts were pessimistic about the condition of journalism as a profession). Also, journalist professionalization seems to be stronger in Portugal than in Spain (Figure 15.2).

However, the relative superiority of Portugal vis-à-vis Spain and other countries does not mitigate the fact that, on average, the Portuguese journalists are poorly professionalized. A study of journalists in Portugal points out several potential causes for this state of affairs, some of them related to the size of the market and the precarious situation of younger workers.⁴⁷ This is actually a common feature of the Iberian countries. For instance, a few years ago, there were about 32,000 students of journalism in Spain.⁴⁸ In an underdeveloped press market, this means that the demand for this kind of profession is much lower than the supply, and that those who need to work are more willing to accept precarious

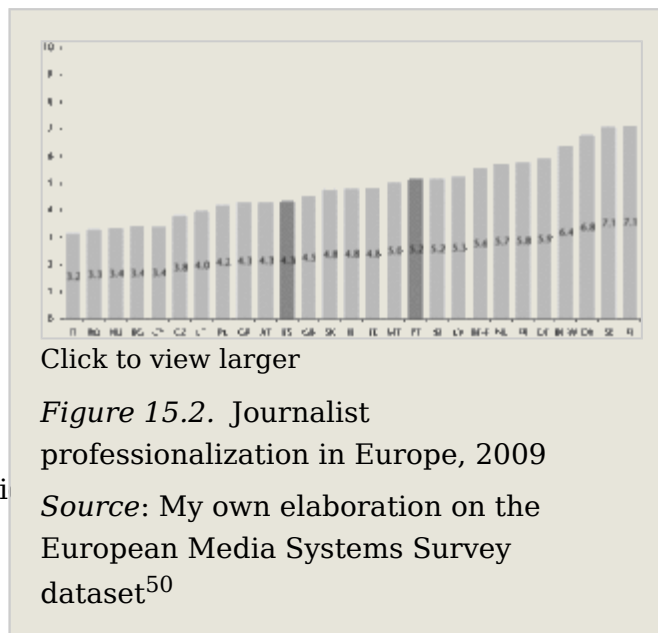
Variety of Media Systems in Third-Wave Democracies

and/or degrading conditions. The Portuguese market is also believed to have been flooded with young educated journalist aspirants in the past decades.⁴⁹

Journalist professionalization in CEE countries is generally very low, but it is actually possible to identify three patterns: countries where professionalization is indeed very weak (Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary), nations with low to moderate levels of professionalization (Czech Republic, Poland, Lithuania), and countries displaying a moderate degree of professionalization (Slovakia, Slovenia, Latvia, Estonia) (Figure 15.2). The low patterns of journalistic autonomy and professionalization in CEE countries are linked to the levels of clientelism and fragmentation of the journalistic community, which are (p.242)

indeed stronger in Romania and Bulgaria than in more consolidated media markets such as Poland or Estonia⁵¹ and residual in the Iberian countries. Professionalization leads to fewer strains on freedom of press: in Europe,

journalist professionalization is strongly and negatively associated with legal, political, and economic threats to press freedom.⁵² As we have seen above, in 2009 political threats to press freedom were not a fundamental problem in Portugal, but in Spain the political constraints on the work of journalists were particularly strong. In the EU26 group, there were only two other countries where press freedom was being equally or more threatened by political actors than in Spain: Greece and Romania. In 2006, the *Madrid Association of the Press*



Variety of Media Systems in Third-Wave Democracies

approved a declaration stating that Spanish journalists were facing a series of problems endangering press freedom and degrading journalists as professionals. Media editors were accused of using the media for propaganda purposes serving powerful people or political parties, and licences were arguably being granted with criteria of ideological affinity or special interests. Press freedom, despite being guaranteed by the Constitution, is not always accepted by public authorities, especially when terrorism or the Spanish royal family are involved.⁵³

In terms of public service and the *media as watchdog* paradigm, journalists from both sides of the frontier face challenges and, to some extent, a degradation of their role. The resilience of the Portuguese former Prime Minister José Sócrates, namely his capacity to stay in office despite the highly mediatized scandals in the mid-2000s, is a good example of how the historical moment in (p.243) which ministers could be fired by the press⁵⁴ has passed. In addition, there has been a debate about whether Manuela Moura Guedes, a newscast anchor known for her anti-government positions, had to resign from *Prisa's TVI* due to the close relationship between the Portuguese and the Spanish socialist prime ministers.

In Portugal, survey data shows that the media is not seen by the public as an agent of change, but as a privileged actor that can retrieve information about the backstage of the political world and offer it to the citizens and democratic institutions that have the means to act. In 2011, more than two-thirds of the citizens considered that allowing the media greater access to the reasons and criteria surrounding the government decision-making process is an effective form of vertical accountability (i.e. a way by which the citizens can actually monitor their elected representatives), even if only a handful actually believed that the media are able to stop abuses from the government.⁵⁵ Conversely, in Spain, the media capacity to control abusive practices by the government is believed to be much stronger: on a scale from 1 to 5, the media get 3.5, the same score granted to the Constitutional Court.⁵⁶

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was not to make an in-depth, comprehensive comparative analysis of the media systems in the Iberian Peninsula and Central and Eastern Europe, but rather to propose an operational comparative framework and to use it in order to describe relevant patterns and trends in the Iberian markets, offering the Portuguese and Spanish cases as benchmarks for the analysis of CEE media systems. The chapter tries therefore to set the ground for comparative studies of media systems from the geographical extremes of the European Union, by identifying interesting patterns to be explored by subsequent research.

One of the most interesting general conclusions to be drawn from this chapter is that being part of a geographical entity and sharing several historical, political, economic, and cultural features may not result in similar media systems being implemented. In fact, the Portuguese and Spanish media systems are more different than one would expect. Despite being strongly influenced by it, the development of the media markets is not completely dependent on historical and political legacies, but can be shaped by the actors that interact with the media system or work within its frontiers. For the students of CEE media systems, the idea that the historical political background is but one factor within the array of dimensions shaping media system developments may encourage them to focus even more on the identification of critical junctures taking place in those countries after 1989.

(p.244) Several other patterns are worth underlining. First, low levels of press market development do not always result in threats to media freedom due to a weaker resilience to pressures from political or economic actors. In the case of Portugal, political and economic threats to press freedom are rather low despite the underdevelopment of its press market. Journalist professionalization and low levels of party polarization may be an asset here. Second, commercialization does result in weaker levels of news and quality information being offered to the audience. This is especially worrying in new democracies where the televised media is probably the most important, if not the only, source of political information

Variety of Media Systems in Third-Wave Democracies

for a considerable amount of the population. Third, private ownership does not always mean higher levels of political bias, and state ownership does not always mean lower levels of bias. In the case of Portugal, political conflict does not sell and seems not to lead to indirect benefits to journalists, editors and owners of private broadcasters, since the levels of political bias are moderate. Fourth, the reasons why Poland managed to create a dual model (as in Italy), whereas commercialization followed a monopolistic pattern in Romania and Bulgaria but not in several other CEE countries, may benefit from the comparison with the Iberian countries' process of TV market liberalization and patterns of competition for audiences and advertisement revenues.

Lastly, an interesting pattern emerges from this preliminary comparative analysis. Quite often, the media systems in Slovakia, Slovenia, or Czech Republic present features that come close to the Iberian models. Would it be therefore possible to speak of a process of *Iberianization* of these media systems? If that is the case, the examination of the degree, causes, and historical path that resulted in this state of affairs may constitute an interesting research agenda for students of comparative political communication in Europe.

Notes

Notes:

(1.) Hallin, D.C. and Mancini, P. *Comparing media systems: Three models of media and politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

(2.) A media system is defined as a network of mass media outlets—television channels, press outlets (newspapers and magazines), radio, and internet—that exist, interact, and compete in a given geographical area, in a given time period, serving the same population, using the same language and cultural codes, following the same legal framework, and facing identical political, economic, and social constraints.

(3.) In this chapter, this acronym is used in reference to Central and Eastern EU member states in 2009, before the

Variety of Media Systems in Third-Wave Democracies

accession of Croatia: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

(4.) Dobek-Ostrowska B. 'Italianization (or mediterraneanization) of the Polish media system? Reality and perspective', in *Comparing Media Systems Beyond the Western World*, Hallin D.C. and Mancini P. (eds.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 26–50.

(5.) Dobek-Ostrowska, B., Glowacki, M., Jakubowicz, K., and Sükösk, M. *Comparative media systems: European and global perspectives* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2010).

(6.) Hallin, D.C. and Mancini, P. *Comparing media systems beyond the Western World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

(7.) Luxembourg is excluded from the analysis since there was no data available to measure some dimensions. The French and Dutch-speaking communities of Belgium are analysed separately.

(8.) Two media system dimensions (bias and journalist professionalization) were measured with data collected by the expert survey *European Media Systems Survey*, while other dimensions (ownership structures, press market development indicators) were measured with data from secondary sources (*European Audiovisual Observatory*, *World Association of Newspapers*). The timeframe of this research was bound by data collection specifications: whereas the data on structural media systems was widely available for the last decade, the soft dimensions (professionalization and political bias) could only be measured through the data collected in late 2009/early 2010 by the expert survey mentioned above.

(9.) Mancini, P. and Zielonka, J. 'Introduction', *International Journal of Press/Politics*, 17: 4 (2012), pp. 379–87.

(10.) WAN—World Association of Newspapers. *World press trends—2010 edition* (Paris: WAN; 2010).

Variety of Media Systems in Third-Wave Democracies

(11.) Except for Belgium, the national codes presented in this and other figures are the ISO 3166 Alpha Codes proposed by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO): Austria (AT), Bulgaria (BG), Cyprus (CY), Czech Republic (CZ), Denmark (DK), Estonia (EE), Finland (FI), France (FR), Germany (DE), Greece (GR), Hungary (HU), Ireland (IE), Italy (IT), Latvia (LV), Lithuania (LT), Malta (MT), Netherlands (NL), Poland (PL), Portugal (PT), Romania (RO), Slovakia (SK), Slovenia (SI), Spain (ES), Sweden (SE), United Kingdom (GB). In the case of Belgium, BE-F is used for Flanders and BE-W for Wallonia.

(12.) EAO—European Audiovisual Observatory. *Yearbook 2010: Television in 36 States* (Strasbourg: EA, 2010).

(13.) Rebelo, J., Ponte, C., Ferin, I., Malho, MJ., and Oliveira, V. *Estudo de Recepção dos Meios de Comunicação Social* (Lisbon: ERC, 2008).

(14.) Štětka, V. 'Media Ownership and commercial pressures', *MDCEE Pillar 1 Final Report 2013*. Available at: <http://mde.politics.ox.ac.uk/images/Final_reports/stetka_2013_final%20report_posted.pdf>.

(15.) EAO, *Yearbook 2010*.

(16.) Hallin and Mancini, *Comparing media systems*.

(17.) Pinto, A.C., Magalhães, P., Sousa, L., and Gorbunova, E. *A qualidade da democracia em portugal: A perspectiva dos cidadãos*. Report I. (Lisbon: ICS, 2012).

(18.) Pearson's correlation coefficient = 0.70, $p < 0.01$.

(19.) Threats related to: access to information and sources; official censorship and self-censorship; the ability of both foreign and local reporters to cover the news freely and without harassment; and the intimidation of journalists by the state or other actors, including arbitrary detention and imprisonment, violent assaults.

(20.) Threats resulting from: the structure of media ownership and the degree of ownership concentration; the costs of

Variety of Media Systems in Third-Wave Democracies

establishing media as well as of production and distribution; the selective withholding of advertising or subsidies by the state or other actors; the impact of corruption and bribery on content; and the economic situation of the country.

(21.) Freedom House. *Freedom of the press 2010: Broad setbacks to global media freedom* (New York: Freedom House, 2010).

(22.) Pearson's correlation coefficients = -0.67 and -0.57; $p < 0.05$.

(23.) EAO—European Audiovisual Observatory. *Yearbook 2008* (Strasbourg: EA, 2008).

(24.) Popescu, M., Toka, G., Gosselin T., and Santana-Pereira, J. *European Media Systems Survey 2010: Results and Documentation. Technical and Data Divulcation Report* (Colchester: University of Essex, 2011). Available from: <<http://www.mediasystemsineurope.org/files/emss10all.pdf>>.

(25.) Popescu, Toka, Gosselin, and Santana-Pereira, *European Media Systems Survey 2010*.

(26.) EAO, *Yearbook 2010*.

(27.) EAO, *Yearbook 2010*.

(28.) This index tackles the positive impact of legal and constitutional guarantees for freedom of expression; the potentially negative aspects of security legislation, the penal code, and other criminal statutes; penalties for libel and defamation; the existence of and ability to use freedom of information legislation; the independence of the judiciary and of official media regulatory bodies; registration requirements for media outlets and journalists; and the ability of journalists to operate freely.

(29.) Hallin and Mancini, *Comparing media systems*.

(30.) Freedom House. *Freedom of the press 2010*.

Variety of Media Systems in Third-Wave Democracies

- (31.) Schulze-Schneider, I. 'The freedom of the Spanish Press', in *Press freedom and pluralism in Europe: Concepts and conditions*, Czepek A., Hellwig M., and Novak E. (eds.) (Bristol: Intellect, 2009).
- (32.) Schulze-Schneider, I. 'The freedom of the Spanish Press'.
- (33.) Voltmer, K. 'Structures of diversity of press and broadcasting systems: The institutional context of political communication in Western Democracies', *Discussion Paper FS III 00-201* (Berlin: WZB, 2000), p. 10.
- (34.) This is achieved by presenting and supporting various viewpoints of a particular issue or by not expressing any kind of preference at all.
- (35.) Popescu, Toka, Gosselin, and Santana-Pereira, *European Media Systems Survey 2010*.
- (36.) Hallin and Mancini, *Comparing media systems*.
- (37.) Dalton, R.J. 'The quantity and the quality of party systems. Party system polarization, its measurement, and its consequences', *Comparative Political Studies*, 41: 7 (2008), pp. 899-920.
- (38.) Alvares, C. and Damásio, M.J. 'Introducing social capital into the "polarized pluralist" model: The different context of press politization in Portugal and Spain', *International Journal of Iberian Studies*, 26: (2013), pp. 133-53.
- (39.) Popescu, Toka, Gosselin, and Santana-Pereira, *European Media Systems Survey 2010*.
- (40.) Magalhães, P. *A qualidade da democracia em Portugal: a perspectiva dos cidadãos*, Initial Report (Lisbon: ICS-UL, 2009).
- (41.) Hallin and Mancini, *Comparing media systems*.
- (42.) Popescu, Toka, Gosselin, and Santana-Pereira, *European Media Systems Survey 2010*.

Variety of Media Systems in Third-Wave Democracies

(43.) Popescu, Toka, Gosselin, and Santana-Pereira, *European Media Systems Survey 2010*.

(44.) Lasas A. 'Media and Political Culture', *MDCEE Pillar 4 Final Report*, 2013. Available at: <http://mde.politics.ox.ac.uk/images/Final_reports/lasas_2013_final%20report_posted.pdf>.

(45.) Štětka, 'Media Ownership and commercial pressures'.

(46.) Measured through an index composed of the following items: 'Journalists in [COUNTRY] are motivated by an ethic of serving the public interest', 'Journalists in [COUNTRY] agree on the criteria for judging excellence in their profession regardless of their political orientations', and 'Journalists have sufficient training to ensure that basic professional norms like accuracy, relevance, completeness, balance, timeliness, double-checking and source confidentiality are respected in news-making practices.' The Cronbach's Alpha (a widely used measure of internal consistency) supports the decision of using these items as a single index ($\alpha = 0.86$).

(47.) Garcia, J.L. *Estudos sobre os jornalistas portugueses* (Lisbon: ICS, 2009).

(48.) Schulze-Schneider, 'The freedom of the Spanish Press'.

(49.) Örnebring, H. 'Journalistic autonomy and professionalization', *MDCEE Pillar 3 Final Report*, 2013. Available at: <http://mde.politics.ox.ac.uk/images/Final_reports/ornebring_2013_final%20report_posted.pdf>.

(50.) Popescu, M, Gosselin, T, and Santana-Pereira, J. *European Media Systems Survey 2010. Data set*. (Colchester: University of Essex, 2010). Available from: <<http://www.mediasystemsineurope.org>>.

(51.) Örnebring, H. 'Journalistic autonomy and professionalization'.

(52.) Pearson's correlation coefficients = -0.70, -0.72 and -0.62; $p < 0.05$.

(53.) Schulze-Schneider, 'The freedom of the Spanish Press'.

Variety of Media Systems in Third-Wave Democracies

(54.) Novais, R. 'Fired by The Press! Ministerial dismissal in a Polarized Pluralist media system', *paper presented at the annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association* (67th Annual National Conference, Chicago, IL, 2 April 2009).

(55.) Pinto, Magalhães, Sousa, and Gorbunova, *A qualidade da democracia em Portugal*.

(56.) Fortes B.G. and Brihuega, I.P. 'Testing the quality of democracy: the case of Spain', *European Political Science*, 11 (2012), pp. 492–508.



Access brought to you by: Universidade de Lisboa, Fac de Direito